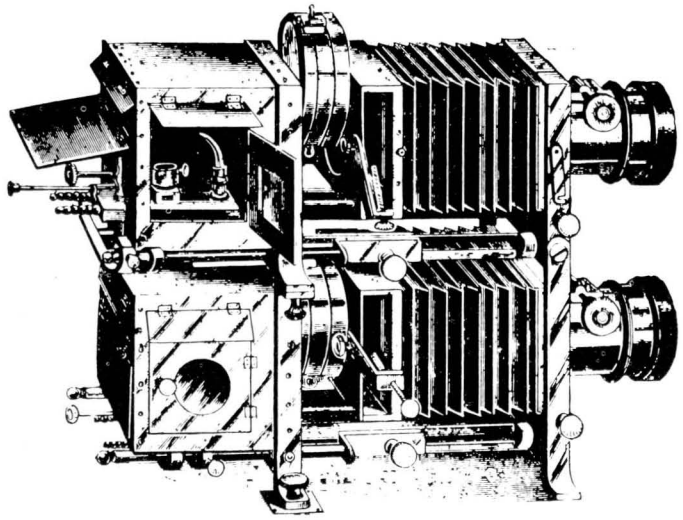
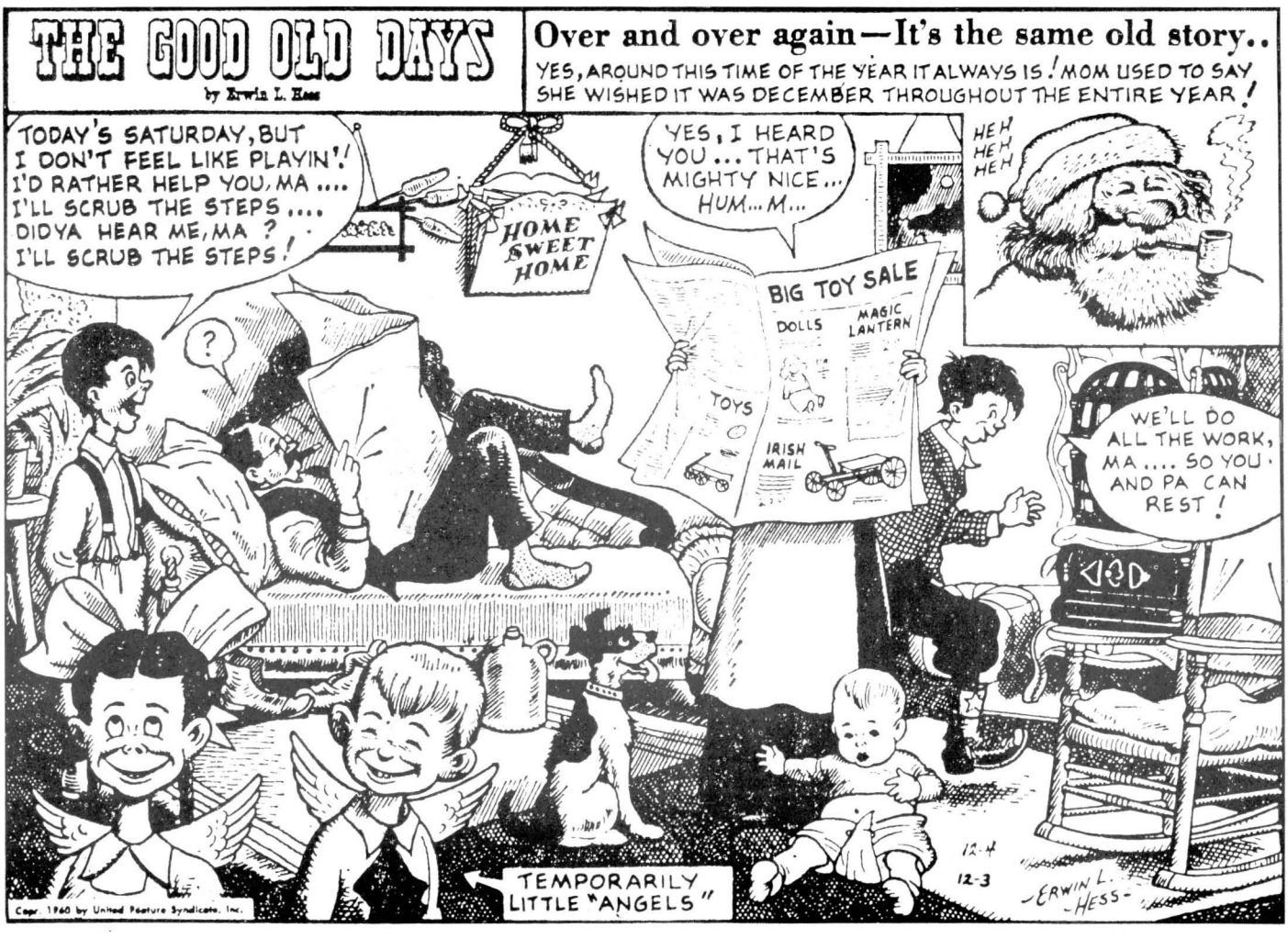


THE IMPROVED "BOSTON IDEAL."

The
Magic Lantern
Bulletin
Vol. 19 No. 1
May, 1989

Will SANTA bring a . . . MAGIC LANTERN?


THE GOOD OLD DAYS
by Erwin L. Hess
Over and over again—It's the same old story..
YES, AROUND THIS TIME OF THE YEAR IT ALWAYS IS! MOM USED TO SAY SHE WISHED IT WAS DECEMBER THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE YEAR!
TODAY'S SATURDAY, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE PLAYIN'! I'D RATHER HELP YOU, MA .... I'LL SCRUB THE STEPS .... DIDYA HEAR ME, MA ? I'LL SCRUB THE STEPS!
HOME SWEET HOME
YES, I HEARD YOU... THAT'S MIGHTY NICE... HUM... M...
BIG TOY SALE
DOLLS
MAGIC LANTERN
TOYS
IRISH MAIL
HEH HEH HEH
WE'LL DO ALL THE WORK, MA .... SO YOU AND PA CAN REST!
?
TEMPORARILY LITTLE "ANGELS"
12-4
12-3
ERWIN L. HESS
Copr. 1960 by United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Chairman's Letter

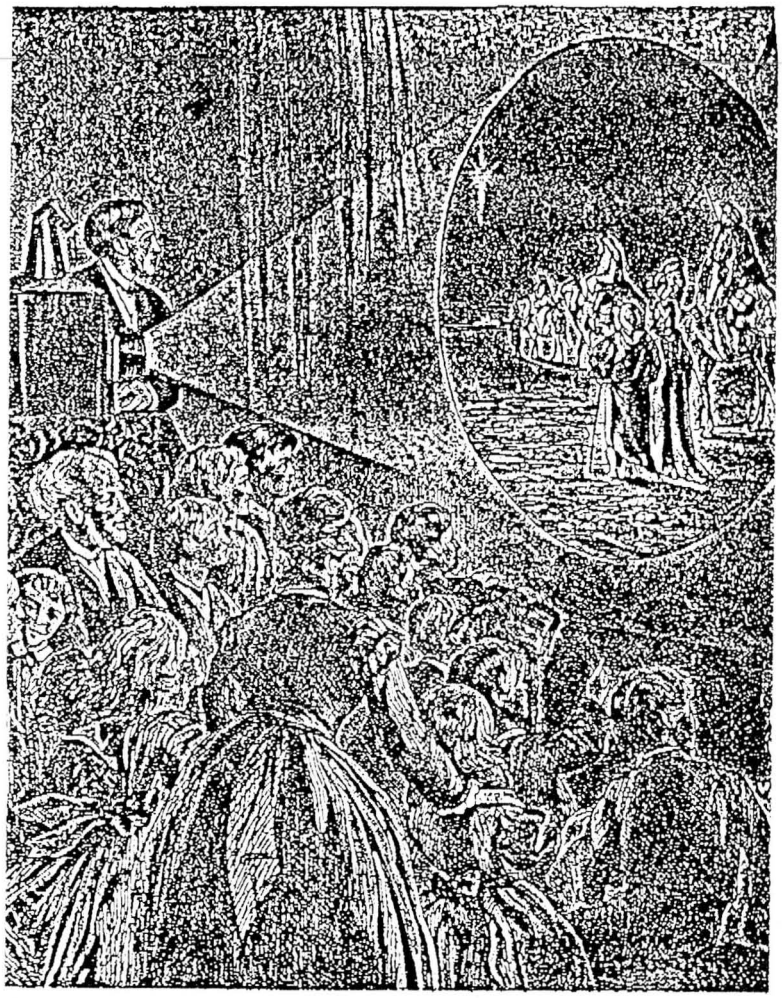
By the time you get to this letter you may either be captivated by our holiday edition or scratching your head wondering how and why we put out a Christmas issue in April. Well, the simple explanation is that this holiday issue took a long time — much longer than anticipated — to get born. It was the Christmas before last when I first thought about trying to put together a holiday related edition. Terry Borton's Christmas magic lantern show, a couple of Christmas cards with magic lanterns, and articles about the holidays and the magic lantern made me realize what an integral part of the holiday season the magic lantern must have been. I also thought about how much I look forward to the holidays with high hopes and expectations that someone — Santa, a member of my family, a friend, or even me myself — will add something wonderful to my collection. There haven't been many Christmases when I have been disappointed. So I decided to invite all of you to share some holiday related magic lantern stories and so this edition.

I first hoped to get all this collected and printed by Christmas 1988, which I hope you all know is long come and gone. Now that the material is here, it is like a present in the closet; it is just too good to keep around for the rest of the year, so we are putting out now our special holiday edition — the spring version.

To all of you who submitted pieces thank you, they are just great. We owe you, as promised in the last bulletin, a Christmas surprise. Look for it before Christmas. For all of us I hope you like this special bulletin and it brings some holiday spirit and cheer to one and all.

Many of us are anticipating a special event that will be like an early Christmas: that's right, the Magic Lantern Convention to be held in Seattle from June 30-July 2. I spoke with Larry Cederblom the other night and he says the Convention Committee is hard at work and everyone is very excited. They have some surprise items lined up for all who attend. I would tell you about them, but I have been sworn to secrecy and anyway, who wants to ruin a good early "Christmas" present. A number of people have already said they are coming. I hope more of you will be able to come and help us celebrate.

The convention will also give us an opportunity to select some new officers. A good and growing society like ours needs to have a change in leadership occassionally to keep things moving. I have felt honored to act as Chairman and carry on a fine tradition started by Joe Koch. I appreciate that in spite of my declaring that I would not run again, a couple of people nominated me anyway. Flattered as I was, I have turned down the nomination. I look forward to working with the next officers to make this an even better organization.



Hadfield, Miles & John; *The Twelve Days of Christmas,* Little, Brown & Co., Inc. 1961.

Before closing I would like to give speical thanks to Jim Flannagan and Ed Lennert, both of whom have done terrific jobs taking on responsibilities that they were not eager to take on, for the betterment of the organization. I would like to give special thanks also to Dick Evans, who has become a good friend over the years, and has been so tireless and unassuming in his willingness to support the society through the printing of our bulletin.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you for putting up with me as Chairman. I am sure it couldn't have been easy, but it sure has been fun for me.

That's all, he wrote . . . .

Mr. Munchausen Saved by a Magic Lantern

Edited by Dick Balzedr from
Mr. Munchausen: An Account of Some of His Recent Adventures
By John Kendrick Bangs
Small, Maynard & Co., 1901

If you should ask me (Mr. Munchausen) to tell you a story I'd have to do it, even if you were to demand the full particulars of how I spent Christmas with Mtulu, King of the Taafe Eatars, on the upper Congo way down in Africa — which is a tale I have never told anyone in all my life.

You may not have heard that some twenty or thirty years ago I was in command of an expedition in Africa. Our object was to find Lake Majolica, which we hoped would turn up half way between Lollokolela and the Clebungo Mountains.

It was considered by a company of gentlemen in London to be well worth their while to set about the discovery of a lake, which they decided in advance to call Majolica, for reasons best knwon to themselves. To me was intrusted the mission of leading the expedition. I will confess that I did not want to go for the very good reason that I did not wish to be eaten alive by the savage tribes that infested that region. I was accompanied by ten Zanzibaris and a thousand tins of condensed dinners. I didn't expect to be gone more than a year and a thousand dinners condensed and tinned, together with the food I expected to find on the way, elephant meat, rhinoceos steaks, and tiger chops, I thought would suffice for the trip.

We went to bed late one night on the fourth day out from Lollokolela, and when we waked up the next morning every mother's son of us, save myself, had been eaten by tigers. You can imagine my distress at having to continue the search for Lake Majolica alone. It was then that I acquired the habit of talking to myself, which has kept me young ever since, for I enjoy my own conversations hugely, and find myself always a sympathetic listener. I walked on for days and days, until finally, on Christmas Eve, I reached King Mtulu's palace.

Now as I may not have told you, King Mtulu was the fiercest of the African chiefs, and it is said that up to the time when I outwitted him, no white man had ever encountered him and lived to tell the tale.

"Who comes here to disturb the royal peace?" cried Mtulu, savagely, as I crossed the threshold. "It is I, your highness." "Who is I?" retored Mtulu, picking up his battle axe and striding forward.

A happy thought struck me then. These tolks are superstitious. Perhaps the missionaries may have told these uncivilized creatures the story of Santa Claus. I will pretend that I am Santa Claus. So I answered, "What is I, O Mtulu, Bravest of the Taafe Chiefs? I am Santa Claus, the Children's Friend, and bearer of gifts to and for all."

Mtulu gazed at me marrowly for a moment and then he beat lightly upon a tom-tom at his side. Immediately thirty of the most villainous-looking natives, each armed with a club, appeared.

"Arrest that man," said Mtulu, "before he goes any farther. He is an impostor."

"If your majesty pleases," I began.

"Silence!" he cried, "I am fierce and I eat men, but I love truth. The truthful man has nothing to fear from me, for I have been converted from my evil ways and since last New Year's day I have eaten only those who have attempted to deceive me. You will be served raw at dinner tomorrow night. My respect for your record as a man of courage leads me to spare you the torture of the frying pan. You are Baron Munchausen. I recognized you the moment you turned pale."

So I was carried off and shut up in a mud hovel, the interior walls of which were of white, a fact which strangely enough, preserved my life when later I came to the crucial moment. I had brought with me, among other things, for my amusement solely, a magic lantern. As a child, I had always been particularly fond of pictures, and when I thought of the lonely nights in Africa, with no books at hand, no theatres, no cotillions to enliven the monotony of my life, I resolved to take with me my little magic-lantern as much for company as for anything else. It was very compact in form. It folded up to be hardly larger than a wallet containing a thousand one dollar bills, and the glass lenses of course could be carried easily in my trouser pockets. The views, instead of being mounted on glass, were put on a substance not unlike glass, but thinner, called gelatine. All of these things I carried in my vest pockets, and when Mtulu confiscated my luggage the magic lantern and views of course escaped his notice.

Christmas morning came and passed and I was about to give myself up for lost. Night was coming on and as I sant despondently awaiting the king's arrival, I suddenly bethought me of a lantern slide of the British army, standing and waiting the command to fire, I happened to have with me. It was a superb view — lifelike as you please. Why not throw that on the wall and when Mtulu enters he will find me apparently with a strong force at my command, thought I. It was no sonner thought than it was done and my life was saved. Hardly was that noble picture reflected upon the rear wall of my prison when the door opened and Mtulu, followed by his suite, appeared. I rose to greet him, but apparently he saw me not. Mute with terror he stood upon the threshold gazing at that terrible line of soldiers ready as he thought to sweep him and his men from the face of the earth with their death-dealing bullets. ➡

"I am your slave," he replied to my greeting, kneeling before me, "I yield all to you."

"I thought you would," said I. "But I ask nothing save the discovery of Lake Majolica. If within twenty-four hours Lake Majolica is not discovered I give the command to fire!" Then I turned and gave the order to carry arms, and lo! by a quick change of slides, the army appeared at a carry. Mtulu gasped with terror, but accepted my ultimatum. I was freed, Lake Majolica was discovered before ten o'clock the next morning, and at five o'clock I was on my way home, the British army reposing quietly in my breast pocket. It was a mighty narrow escape!

Gilbert's Galantee Show

By R.A. Gilbert

The first showing of our "good old fashioned Christmas" slide sequence, as part of an evening's magic lantern entertainment, was to be at the Rotary Club's Christmas Dinner in the refectory, at the lovely Lichfield Cathedral.

Their hospitality was generous and we enjoyed a splendid traditional Christmas dinner with them. Later, with glasses charged with after-dinner port, they settled back to be entertained. That port certainly loosened their vocal chords. They were a wonderful audience.

Our Christmas sequence started with Dorre's picture of the Arrival of the Three Wise Men and continued where it all began nearly 2000 years ago in the fields around Bethlehem with a dissolve sequence of shepherds around a fire in the fields, the angel appearing unto them and then into the manger. This was set to the accompaniment of Silent Night played on a musical box. Everyone started humming softly and continued to do so when Jingle Bells brought the panoramic and slipping slides portraying skating, snowballing and sledding.

Santa's escapades with his aerial reindeer and chimney sweeping routine were projected to the tune of Good King Wenceslas. By now they were singing well. The carol singers appeared at night in front of the house that had been the scene of the snowballing by day. The house door opened and yellow light flooded out onto the snow showing a lady with a little girl listening to the carol singers. Everyone was now singing, "As with gladness men of old," with the words on the screen.

The dropping of a pin could be heard during the dramatic reading of "Christmas Day in the Workhouse" and we all felt sobered by the thoughts of this 'good old fashioned Christmas'.

The show finished with the exciting sounds and visual effects of the Incomparable Chromotropes.

Celebrating Christmas

Joe and Alice Koch

Alice and I have put on several enjoyable Christmas shows over the past thirteen years.

If the audience is partly adult or older teenagers, I soften them up with one of my favorite jokes.

"Envision the scene, Santa and his reindeer are draped over a farmers' outhouse. The presents are spilling out of the sleigh onto the snow and Santa in a loud voice shouts "DUMKOFFS . . . I said the Schnidt house!"

I then usually read *A Visit From St. Nicholas* or *The Night Before Christmas* by Clement C. Moore . . . a life long favorite of ours. I read it to my boys when they were small and now they do the same for their children.

Then comes the Magic Lantern Show with about one hundred Christmas slides. They are U.S., English and European. The Santas are all shapes, sizes and dress. The kiddies love them.

The 'piece de resistance' of the evening, of course, are the Christmas Carols. We put the words on the screen and everyone sings. Some of the carol slides are decorated with holly berries, Christmas trees, ribbons, etc. One memorable show was when our friend, Harry Kennedy, played along using his surplus Army Field Organ and everyone sang.

I played Santa for many years using a Santa suit Alice made for me. The response was so good after the first time, I remarked to Alice "That went so well and Easter is coming up." Alice replied rather sharply, "I am not making a damned BUNNY SUIT!"

Recently the Santa suit was inherited by our sons and they use it for scouts and office parties. They now play Santa for their own children.

We have a group of Christmas advertising slides, some of which are:

1. 'Mallory Hats': What better gift for Christmas.
2. 'Shop early for holiday goods, Santa is waiting to see you', showing Santa reading his Christmas list sitting in an easy chair.
3. 'Open a bank account for $100 or more'. Shows Santa on sleigh with his reindeer. He is holding a giant bank book in his hand.
4. 'Get a Christmas Turkey Free — 15 lbs. — for shopping with your home town merchants' given by your local Chamber of Commerce.
5. Joe's favorite slide, Christmas tree with bookcase in front; 'A Globe Wernicke sectional bookcase is an ideal Christmas gift. A gift of noble origin. It compliments the intelligence of the recipient.'

Carcross Doings Christmas Good Cheer

The Weekly Star
Whitehorse Yukon Territory
January 2, 1915
submitted by Jim Robb

On the evening of December 31st, the venerable Archdeacon gave his yearly treat to the Indians of Carcross. The first item on the program was supper at the rectory at five o'clock. After supper, a short iterim was allowed as an aid to digestion. Then the Inidans again assembled, this time in the reading room where they were treated to a picture show, not in the up to date manner of the neighboring cities but an old fashioned magic lantern show. However, the pictures were good, mostly typical of the country, and were greatly enjoyed by the Indians who happened to be present. After the pictures, the Indians were given a Christmas treat. Besides, there was a useful present for every man, woman and child in the camp. Afterward the Indians departed with many expressions of thanks for the entertainment.

Sleigh Bells and Zither Music

By Leora Wood Wells

The 1960's were the heyday of our magic lantern collecting. Most of the lanterns and slides came from the antique shops and flea markets of Coastal Maine. In 1962, in less than three weeks, we bought 18 lanterns, 389 slides, a catalogue, tickets for a magic lantern show and a batch of spare parts — and only in one instance did we purchase more than one lantern from a single dealer.

As the collection grew, so did our desire to do something with it. In 1963, Kent (age 15) and I decided to create a Christmas lantern show. We covered the dining room table with a white sheet and got out every slides in the collection that had anything to do with Christmas — snow scenes and sleighing scenes, ice skaters, churches, angels, nativity scenes, people running to catch trains, toys, children playing, carolers, Santas, musicians, dancers and parades. We arranged and rearranged the slides until a storyline centered around family celebrations emerged. One of our choicest slides showed a Christmas tree on a table and underneath it, two children playing with — what else! — a magic lantern.

We arranged and rearranged the slides until a storyline centered around family celebrations emerged. I wrote a script, and we selected appropriate backgroiund music — carols, train sounds, sleighing songs, zither music for the slide of a monkey tipping over a Christmas tree.

We had one problem. The slides were every conceivable size and thickness from large and small rectangular ones to wooden framed ones. Out of shirt cardboards from the laundry, Kent devised holders so all the slides could be shown on a single Marcy lantern. Then I narrated the show and kent juggled all the slides and recording equipment. After several days of hard work, we had our show, from the first tree-trimming slide to the last view of a tired-out sleeping child and a soft "Merry Christmas" as the last strains of "Silent Night" faded away.

The Magic, Magic Lantern Show

By Larry Cederblom

T'was the night before the big show and the lantern is still,
the theater is ready, the occasion listed on the playbill.

The lantern all dressed in its brass and tin,
waits for the lanternist to begin.

Slides were chosen and in their proper place,
waiting to be projected, the light to embrace.

When out of the darkness there came a pitter-patter,
the lantern came to life with a sudden clatter!

And the elf that appeared was to hard to resist,
he looked the part of an old projectionist.

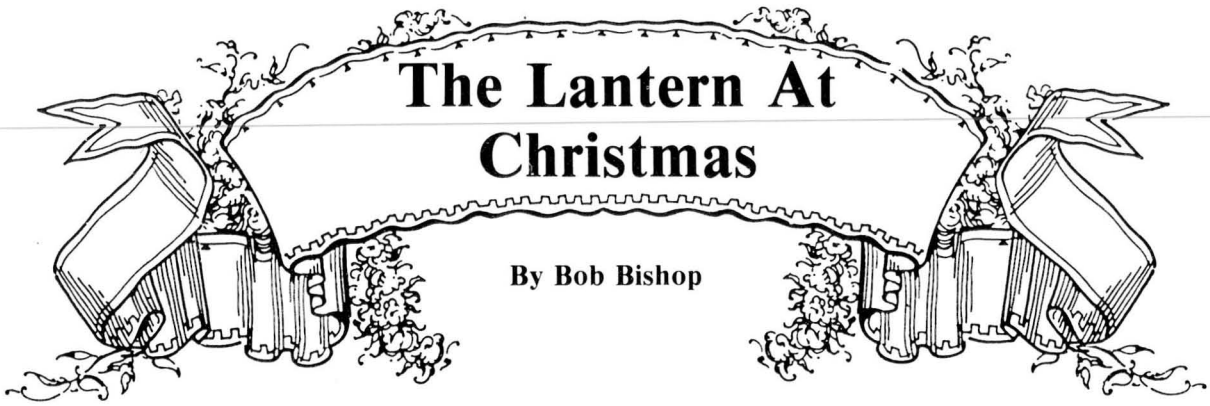
He knew what to do and started the show,
slides running and dissolving with a continuous flow.

The magic was there in slippers and 'tropes,
this old boy really knew the ropes.

The theater alive with colors and motion,
the elf was causing quite a commotion.

When at last he made a slide appear,
saying "Merry Christmas to all and to all good cheer."

Taken from Scenes in a Magic Lantern Show . . . see page 10.



The Lantern At Christmas

By Bob Bishop

Once again the holiday season is behind us. The misteltoe and holly has been laid aside. Children have made their wishes known but have learned to live with what they have recieved as gifts instead. Merchants have sagely noted what has sold well; determined what was in vogue and hopefully ordered wise choices for the following year. Parents have compromised with their children and have given their offspring some prarcel of what the little ones wanted and as parents very often supplied what they hoped was a modicum of common sense in their gifting.

For parents of all the ages have desired their young ones to have the best of a brave new world. Parents have always seized upon any new device; any new method; any new concept adapted as toys so while playing with a tinplate spyglass from Nurenburg their child would possibly dream of the stars and walk that path leading to be an astronomer. Toy musical instruments are hung from the Christmas tree. Who knows that hidden talent is awaiting release.

Todays seemingly insatiable children have a choice of high tech entertainment which rivals the wonders of the Arabian Nights. They ursup control of the family television and use its screen as their playing field as silicon chips spill out some authors dream which the children accept as their own.

Grandparents decry the catering to the young and warn of dire consequence if the new generations are not properly shown by example to respect age old values of honor, integrity, love of country and family.

But then, was it not ever so, even in the days prior to television, movies, video tapes and floppy disks. In every generation parents have faced the same problem of how to provide meaningful example while leading their siblings toward an ever more technical world.

So when the light oils were separated from the petroleum crude, the word went forth from Williamsburg, NY (now known as Brooklynn), that there was once again oil for all the lamps of China. The magic lantern was swiftly adapted to use 'paraffin oil'. Yellow oil of rape and olive oil, sometimes called Colza oil as well as candles became obsolete. No longer was it necessary to add camphor to sperm oil for additional brightness. Now with the improved Marcy lamp, which was widely copied throughout the lantern world, the magic lantern could come out from behind the screen and take its honored place among the audience.

Now the magical little projector was not only in the hands of wandering projectionists and Gallantee showmen but father could operate the family lantern in the parlour. It was not long before the mail order houses such as Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward displayed varied sized and valued lanterns in their sales catalogues. Now it was possible for the children to have their own toy projectors complete with librarys of transparencys.

The advertising pages of every lantern maker's sales catalogue were filled with scores of categories. Thousands of slides depicted most any subject under the sun. In addition there were religious series for most all denominations in Christendom. Name most any fraternal organization and in some slide manufacturers catalogue one could find the appropriate images to indoctrinate a novice into the Masonic Order: the Elks; the Eagles; Woodsmen of the World; Knight Templars; the Salvation Army or I suppose even the Mystic Nights of the Sea.

So it was the magic lantern became the 'flying carpet' transporting young Alladins anywhere their lantern could shine. For young adventurers with vivid imaginations came to believe the old adage. The magic of the lantern seemed to be "Things are as they appear to be". Many a family experienced a wonder-filled holiday because of the magic lantern.

Now decades later some of we older children also relive the wonder as we find bits and pieces of the Gas Light Era which we add to our collections. It appears these same little lanterns served the same purposes as their more sophisticated replacements continued to give joy to one and all who came in contact with those same precious little lanterns. That includes —

The Old Projectionist.

Christmas in Wakefield -1898

By Trevor Beattie

22 December 1898. The spacious hall of the Mechanics Institute in Wakefield, England is dark, silent and very hot. There is a choking smell comprised of a rich mixture of burning gases and the body odour of about eighty working men and urchins.

A dim glow from the rear of a biunial lantern gently illuminates the face of Mr. G.H. Wood, lanternist to the Institute. He has just illustrated a lecture on the "Lakes, Passes and Glaciers of Switzerland." The polite applause has died away and he would usually now be shutting off the supply to his Newton mixed jets.

There is, however, a gleam in Mr. Wood's eye as he adjusts his limes. He is normally silent but now he annouces that there will be a small festive addition to the programme. He opens a box of hs own slides in their new wooden mounts and for the next half hour the audience roars with delight as acrobats tumble, noses grow and rats are swallowed.

22 December 1988. The narrow hall of my house is dark and silent. The heat is supplied by two tungsten halogen lamps and a radiator. Ninety years later Mr. Wood's biunial is once again in use for a Christmas show. The audience is smaller (and more fragrant) but the slides are much the same. They have to be shown more rapidly to retain the attention of the video generation but the reaction to them is similar.

The lantern is just as magical as it ever was — but the nature of its spell has changed. In the 1890s the images were familiar but the medium was novel. Now the medium holds no mystery — we all understand projection and animation — but the images speak mysteriously of a bygone age. Mr. Wood's lantern has not changed — it remains the timeless spirit of Christmas past and countless Christmas's to come.

Some of the unusual Christmas slides are

1. A group of old Swiss slides showing Santa carrying a Swiss flag.

   Santa with a clay pipe.

   Santa climbing down one of three chimneys.

   Santa standing on stool to reach stockings hung on the mantel.

2. A set of beautiful Beale slides.

3. GLEE TREE

   Children in circle standing before Chrisstmas tree. Clothing and tree look victorian. Dated 1897.

Christmas Present

By John Potter

This Christmas I had a pleasant surprise. After we had opened our present from my Aunt and Uncle, she handed me another box for me. It was the size of a box that a wallet would come in, and when I opened it there were two glass slides in it. One was a black and white slide of some sort of temple. The information on the slide was so faded, and in French that I couldn't make it out. The other, was a beautifully colored picture of an American Indian. Unformtunately, there was no information on the slide as to who it was, or when it was taken. After I had seen the slides my Aunt said that she had found them in a drawer, along with a note saying that it was for Christmas, 1984. It took several years for me to get them, but it was worth it.

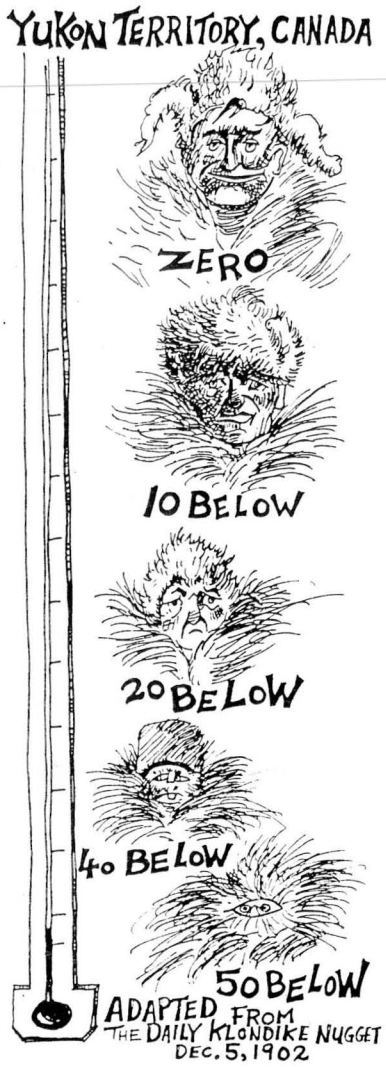
Christmas, 1963

By Bill Read

My first real taste of Magic, involving the Lantern, was at Christmas time of 1963 in Yakima, a small city in central Washington where I was serving as a management trainee of an insurance company. We had lived in Yakima two years by then, and had joined the local rural Methodist Church. The Building was one of the 1950 Roman Brick, high vaulted ceiling in the sanctuary but with the balance of the building one story, flat roof, lots of windows variety so popular at that time and recreated all around the country in a non-denominational manner. What it did have was a young minister, a young family type congregation, and Elders who didn't mind some experimentation from it's younger members.

As it was a rural area, there were no artificial lights around the church; the featurless brick two story plus outside wall of the sanctuary made an inviting screen, and the construction of a slide projector seemed possible. I used a tube from a paper towel roll, a lens from a pair of old field glasses, a wooden box including a 150Wt clear lamp, and a sillouete of wise men, an angel, and camels cut from a Christmas card, set the box about 200 feet away, and projected the image on that wall. I left the box unattended except to turn the light off and on, and replace the bulb once, for the week before Christmas, and was pleased at the results.

I really didn't get further inovlved in Magic Lanterns until four years ago when buying a slide collection, but have always been a tinkerer and an accumulator of "things". Am looking forward with real expectation to the convention in 1990.



A Treat for the Scholars

By David Brooke

My wife and I recently gave a magic lantern show at Bard College, to help celebrate the end of their fall semester. I was later reminded of the words of the Galantee showman whom Mayhew interviewed in 1850.

> A month before Christmas . . . we went with a Galantee show of the magic lantern. We showed it . . . at the schools where there was a breaking up . . . by way of a treat to the scholars. There was Harlequin and Billy Buttons and such like . . . the Galantee show don't answer now because magic lanterns are so cheap in the shops.

Well, magic lanterns are far from common now, but scholars are still apparently celebrating their departure from school, and we may all be neglecting a potential audience.

Having endured (a long time ago) the rigors of an English boarding school, I can assure you that a magic lantern show would have been a very popular end-of-term treat. Lanterns were definitely out during the early 1940's, and the only optical entertainment available to us were stereoscope cards illustrating life in the trenches during the Great War. These merely served to remind us of the discomforts of boarding school and the inevitability of National Service. We sang such defiant ditties as

> No more Latin, no more French
> No more sitting on a hard board bench
> No more beetles in my bath
> Trying hard to make me laugh

as we prepared to catch the train to home and four weeks freedom. We would have appreciated some amusing visual trickery.

I realize that scholars are much more skeptical now than we were then, and I'm not at all sure what would break them up — if you will excuse the pun. I have written a new (rhyming) libretto for *Pussy's Road to Ruin,* incorporating some mdoern thoughts, and that seemed to go down quite well at Bard College.

My lantern resolution for 1989 is to contact all the more rigorous boarding schools in my area, offering them a Galantee show for Christmas. I have some slightly naughty French slides of *Little Red Riding Hood* (nothing, of course, like those that we were shown at the London Convention by that charming Italian lady) and I am currently working on a version of *Billy Buttons* which is racier than the Galantee showman every dreamed of.

WANTED

Wanted: Slides of 'CURFEW MUST NOT RING TONIGHT'. Details to Don Attle, 65 Mill Road Avenue, Angmering, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN-16 4-HX, England. Telephone 0903-782883.

Wanted: To buy, borrow, or have photos made of slides or drawings of the series "Seven Wonders of the World" by the magic lantern slide artist Joseph Boggs Beale. Ken Berry, 7513 Clayton Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

Wanted: Magic Lanterns, Chromotropes, Mechanical Slides, accessories, etc. Doug Johnson, 529 W. Encanto, Phoenix, AZ 85003.

Wanted: Any magic lantern slides on the Yukon Territory or Alaska in general. Jim Robb, c/o Box 5132, White Horse, Yukon, Canada Y1A453.

Scenes In A Magic Lantern

Edited by Dick Balzer From
***London Illustrated News,* Dec. 25, 1858**

It is only when a merry Christmas party of both sexes are assembled under some hospitable roof, and Professor Smiley and his lantern are specially engaged for the evening, that the merits of this popular instrument can be properly appreciated.

No sooner is tea over than the young people, who are in a state of high fermentation, commence operations by clearning away the tables and arranging chairs and route-seats in parallel rows, like the stalls and pit-benches in a theatre. This done, a small square table covered with green cloth is placed at one end of the room, and a table-cloth of snowy whiteness hung against the opposite wall, so as to face the spectators.

The preparations being completed fully half an hour before the time at which the Professor is expected to arrive. He thinks nothing of the beautiful dissolving views at the Polytechnic, because he knows it is all a trick; but he loves to expatiate upon the wonderful effects of the Phantasmagoria which he remembers having seen about the beginning of the present century, and descirbes somewhat in the following intelligible style:

The little Professor glides into the room like one of the figures in his own slides. He is a mild-looking man in black, with scanty fair hair and weak eyes, which obliges him to wear large silver-mounted spectacles, and gives him an inquisitive air as he scans the company and makes his formal salutations to the master and mistress of the house. He is followed by a servant bearing his magic lantern in a black box, the sight of which excites in the younger children feelings of mingled awe and curiosity that effectually subdues any indiscreet tendency to meriment amongst them. Meanwhile the professor has taken his post behind the green-covered table, and is busily engaged preparing.

The Professor has completed his mysterious preparations: the lights are extinguished, and, after a few preliminary flickers and false starts, a broad disc of light falls on the white surface of the cloth on the opposite wall. The hum of approval swells into a burst of applause, when, with a jerk, a jolly Jack Tar appears on the scene taking a tender farewell of his sweetheart previous to embarking for the "Eastern Hingees and parts beyond the sea," in H.M.S. *Tremendous,* which we see floating gallantly over the deep blue waves in the distance. This touching opening of the pictorial epic is followed by a poetical view of the Isle of Wight by moonlight — the Needles are visible, bearing N.N.W. by compass, and the *Tremendous,* with her studding-sails and spanker-booms all set, appears gradually melting away, like a penny ice in the Dog-days, to the well-known air of "Then farewell, my trim-built wherry," supplied by a musical-box which the Professor has artfully introduced as a novel and unexpected effect. The succeeding tableau is calculated to create the deepest sympathy in every bosom. A storm rages, the good ship is seen tossed on the mountain billows, lightnings flash, and dismal thunder (elicited by a confederate from a teatray) makes the hearts of the sympathising children shudder; thick clouds overspread the scene, and the spectators are left in doubt and darknes, while the musical-box interprets "The Bay of Biscay" in truly artistic style. "What has become of poor Jack?" is the whispered inquiry round the room. "Is he gone down with the ship?" Not a bit of it. Hooray! There he is! He has escaped and landed in the Flowery Land where the British Lion is making small change of the Celestials. Our friend Jack, anxious to possess a real live Chinaman, has made fast to Commissioner Yeh's pigtail, by which he means to tow him alongside, to the appropriate music of "Yo, heave ho!" Again the scene is changed, and the nautical drama concludes with the Sailor's Hornpipe, danced at Portsmouth by Jack and his sweetheart, amidst the tumultuous applause and acclamations of the spectators.

The exhibitor has not, however, exhausted his pictorial stores, though, I fear, I may have the patience of my readers; so, leaving to their imagination to fill up the long series of comical and curious figures which the Professor has still to show, I take my leave, and wish them good night.

J.S. Coyne

1988 Christmas Show

By Don and Marjorie Attle

About eighteen months ago I was asked if we would give a Christmas Magic Lantern Show in December 1988; we said yes, but at that time we had no real Christmas slides. However, about six weeks before the show, I purchased six slides with words and illustrations of 'Once in Royal David's City'. I recorded the music and so we now had a Christmas Carol for the audience to sing, this was a beginning.

We had a set of Slides of Santa Claus, but these were not very interesting, so we proceeded to make up our version of a "Journey To The Home Of Father Christmas.' This comprised a summer to winter dissolve, ship sailing, ships in the Arctic, polar bears, men on sledges, reindeer, and finally three slides of a Victorian Father Christmas. So far so good.

We still needed another story, and on looking through our odd religious slides, decided we could show scenes of the nativity. My wife wrote the story and we called it the 'Star of Bethlehem', made up as follows: Mary's house, Mary in house with Angel, Mary and Joseph on way to Bethlehem, Jesus in a manger, shepherds, light in sky, Angel appears (effect), shepherds with Angel, star of the east, three wise men, the holy land.

We then included a Primus set of Cinderella, a popular Christmas pantomime. The rest of the programme was made up of two life model sets with my wife reading the poems and of other slides which have proved popular. We finished the show with slipping, Chromotropes, and rackwork slides, the whole performance lasting one hour and a quarter.

From the audience reaction we felt we had presented a successful Christmas show with odd slides, and hope to build on this for next Christmas.

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